## REMARKS

Applicant respectfully requests reconsideration of the present application in view of the foregoing amendments and in view of the reasons that follow.

### *Status of Claims:*

Claims 1 and 17 are currently being amended.

No claims are currently being added or canceled.

This amendment amends claims in this application. A detailed listing of all claims that are, or were, in the application, irrespective of whether the claims remain under examination in the application, is presented, with an appropriate defined status identifier.

After amending the claims as set forth above, claims 1-17 are now pending in this application.

### *Claim Rejections – Prior Art:*

In the Office Action, claims 1 and 17 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over U.S. Patent No. 5,719,681 to Sasanuma in view of U.S. Patent No. 5,796,936 to Watabe; and claims 2-16 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Sasanuma in view of Watabe and further in view of U.S. Patent No. 5,936,741 to Burns. These rejections are traversed with respect to the presently pending claims, for at least the reasons given below.

Presently pending independent claims 1 and 17 have been amended to add features that are described on page 8, line 31 to page 9, line 3 of the specification. That portion of the specification states that:

> *'Here, the yellow sub scanning direction image enabled signal is a hardware control signal which is necessarily used for forming an image. As this signal, there are "an external yellow sub scanning direction image enabled signal" which is used for usual printing and "an internal yellow sub scanning direction image enabled signal" which is generated to be used in the printer engine when a part of a test pattern is outputted. As a control signal for adding a specific hidden pattern, the above-described "external yellow sub scanning direction image enabled signal" is used.'*

In presently pending independent claims 1 and 17, an external signal may correspond to "an external yellow sub scanning direction image enabled signal", and an internal signal may correspond to "an internal yellow sub scanning direction image enabled signal". Accordingly, these features are fully supported by the specification.

Claims 1 and 17 are also directed to the following features: a) the hardware control signal includes an external signal which is used for usual printing and an internal signal which is generated to be used in the printer engine when a part of a test pattern is outputted, b) specific hidden pattern control synthesizing means or unit adds the specific hidden pattern on an output image when either the external signal of the hardware control signal or the software control signal is detected, and the means or unit does not add the specific hidden pattern on the output image when the internal signal of the hardware control signal is detected.

The Office Action asserts that even though Sasanuma does disclose that the specific hidden pattern is added or not added on the basis of the detection of any of hardware control signal and software control signal, Watabe discloses controlling operation in a computerized system using hardware control signal and software control signal. Applicant respectfully disagrees.

Namely, Watabe merely discloses a distributed control system that includes a plurality of controllers in which all the microcomputers in the individual controllers have a random adopter (LA), so that they can operate as the communications 6110, 6210, 6310 and 6410 (see column 10, lines 53-56 of Watabe). Watabe further discloses that although neither the hardware nor software of the communications is made redundant in the prior art, they can be made redundant to improve reliability in the construction of the present embodiment (see column 10, lines 56-59 of Watabe). Such disclosures in Watabe does not have any relationship with the subject matter in presently pending claims 1 and 17 as described above.

Furthermore, Watabe does not teach or suggest that: a) a hardware control signal includes an external signal which is used for usual printing and an intend signal which is generated to be used in the printer engine when a part of a test pattern is outputted, and b) specific hidden pattern control synthesizing means or unit that adds the specific hidden pattern on an output image when either the external signal of the hardware control signal or the software control signal is detected, and the means or unit does not add the specific hidden

pattern on the output image when the internal signal of the hardware control signal is detected, according to the presently pending independent claims.

Accordingly, presently pending independent claims 1 and 17 are patentable over the combined teachings of Sasanuma and Watabe.

### *Conclusion:*

Since all of the issues raised in the Office Action have been addressed in this Amendment and Reply, Applicant believes that the present application is now in condition for allowance, and an early indication of allowance is respectfully requested.

The Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned by telephone if it is felt that a telephone interview would advance the prosecution of the present application.

The Commissioner is hereby authorized to charge any additional fees which may be required regarding this application under 37 C.F.R. §§ 1.16-1.17, or credit any overpayment, to Deposit Account No. 19-0741. Should no proper payment be enclosed herewith, as by a check or credit card payment form being in the wrong amount, unsigned, post-dated, otherwise improper or informal or even entirely missing, the Commissioner is authorized to charge the unpaid amount to Deposit Account No. 19-0741. If any extensions of time are needed for timely acceptance of papers submitted herewith, Applicant hereby petitions for such extension under 37 C.F.R. §1.136 and authorizes payment of any such extensions fees to Deposit Account No. 19-0741.

Respectfully submitted,

Date _February 9, 2007_          By _Phillip J. Articola_

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